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Governor

STATE OF NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF ROADS

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June 8, 2012

Dear Nebraska Bridge Owner:

Re: Bridge Inspection Program
Memo No. 120608 – General

This memorandum to all Nebraska Bridge Owners provides an update on the NE Bridge Inspection Program (BIP). This and other BIP Memos are on the Bridge Division website for your easy reference.

NDOR and FHWA thank you for your cooperation and efforts to meet the requirements of the National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS). The NE BIP has experienced considerable change and improvements. NDOR has shared these changes in the BIP Manual, and has also been sharing information with all Local Public Agency Bridge Owners at the NACO meetings and RC training workshops. The Bridge Division staff has worked with many of you individually. NDOR also anticipates organizing another Bridge Conference in 2013. Three very important subjects are discussed in this Memo:

1. FHWA NBIS Metrics
2. QA Evaluation of the Bridge Inspection Program
3. The BIP Manual Revision 1, November 2011.

1. **FHWA NBIS Metrics:** FHWA established these Metrics in 2011 for review to all state agency bridge inspection programs for compliance with the Federal law. The 23 Metrics tie specific measurements with compliance status (full, substantial and non-compliance). FHWA-NE late in 2011 completed their first review of the NBIS Metrics and some of you were contacted by FHWA-NE for this review. The Metrics that were found in non-compliance that involve Local Bridge Owners are listed below. Nebraska Bridge Owners must follow the procedures in the BIP Manual for compliance to be attained. We urge you to read the BIP Manual procedures, especially those related to the Metrics below, and put the procedures into effect immediately.

- **Metrics on Inspection Frequency** – All bridges are to be inspected at intervals not exceeding 24 months (12 months for some special cases). FHWA in Washington DC calculates the time interval between routine inspection dates from the inventory data. Local Owners need to:
 - Read the monthly and quarterly email notifications from NDOR regarding inspections that are due within the next months.
 - Make sure inspections are done within 24 months of the prior inspection. For example, if an inspection was done in October 2011, get the next inspection done in October 2013. If an inspection is delayed, say for a weather related event, immediately consult the NDOR BIP Program Manager.

- Input new routine inspections in Pontis (NBI Inspection) correctly. When inputting a new inspection, select “new” inspection versus “edit” of prior inspections. Editing a prior inspection overwrites the prior inspection information with the new inspection information, but holds the prior inspection date. Thus, the calculation of the interval between the two most recent inspections gives an interval length that is double the expected frequency.
- Input inspections for new or reconstructed bridges, or structures repaired after a Critical Finding, as “Special Inspections”. “Routine Inspections” are regularly scheduled, typically every 24 months. This accomplishes two objectives: 1) the FHWA calculation of inspection interval will be based on the dates of the scheduled inspections; and 2) it allows Owners to schedule the first Routine Inspection in a month that best fits their bridge inventory inspection schedule.
- **Metric on Posting/Restriction** – All bridges are to be posted or restricted in accordance with the AASHTO Manual or applicable State Law. State Statute 39-1411 requires that the safe load be posted at each end of a bridge. Bridges should never be posted over the posting values shown on the most current Load Rating Summary Sheet (LRSS). NDOR encourages Bridge Owners not to post bridges for less than the posting values on the most current LRSS.
Local Owners need to:
 - Read and immediately respond to NDOR’s letter that provides a list of your bridges requiring load posting. Verify the field posting.
 - Check all your individual bridge records to make sure you have the most current LRSS from your consultant Load Rating Engineer or NDOR.
 - Make sure inspectors acquire the most current LRSS (the actual document, sealed by a NE PE) and check load posting signs found at the bridge for correct posting values. This check is now required by the BIP Manual.Note: QA Evaluation reviews of postings will commence June 15, 2012.
- **Metric on Monitoring Scour Critical Bridges** – Owners with Scour Critical bridges must have a current Plan of Action (POA) and follow-up on these.
Local Owners need to:
 - Make sure you have in your Bridge File or individual bridge records the current hydraulics assessment for your bridges.
 - Read the Manual on execution of Plans of Action.
 - Make sure you can show evidence that there has been follow-up for all of your Scour Critical Bridges that have a Plan of Action.
 - Make sure all of your structures over waterways are properly sized and hydraulic reports and bridge plans have been forwarded to NDOR in accordance with state statute, NDOR policy and your Federal Funds Purchase Program Agreement.Note: QA Evaluation reviews will be checking Owner Records for POA follow-up.
- **Metric on Quality Control/Quality Assurance** – The BIP program should have systematic Quality Control (QC) and Quality Assurance (QA) procedures that promote a high degree of accuracy and consistency in the reports and inventory data.
Local Owners need to:
 - Complete, or cause to be completed, QC review on every report or inspection dataset that is created for your bridges. QC is the responsibility of the organization that creates a report or does an inspection. This includes your organization or any consultants completing BIP work.
 - Read the attachment to this Memo for a list of examples of QC activities.

- **Metric on Follow-up on Critical Findings** – Critical findings must be addressed in a timely manner. FHWA is periodically notified of actions taken to resolve critical findings. Local Owners need to:
 - Read the BIP Manual for the situations that are critical findings - these require bridge closure. Report these to NDOR using the DR320 Critical Finding Report following instructions in DR320i.
 - Maintain a list of your structures that have critical findings. Check your list at least monthly and report to NDOR any critical finding reports that have been closed.
 - Have an inspector complete a Special Inspection after work is completed to address Critical Findings that require structural repairs. Note that some situations will warrant a new load rating which must be done prior to opening the bridge; check with your Load Rating Engineer.
2. **QA Evaluation of the BIP:** The QA Evaluation is completed on NBIS requirements for inspection, load rating, scour assessment, records and follow-up. The QA evaluation findings summary is attached for the 2011 NBIS dataset and the associated reports (program work done in 2010). Participant Individual Reports have been sent via email by the QA Consultant, Parsons Brinckerhoff. Please review your reports and contact them if you have questions. These reports are for you and your employees use to improve your processes and QC. We treat the Participants' Individual Reports as confidential and recommend that you **not** file them in your bridge file or records.
3. **BIP Manual Rev 1, November 2011:** This revision is on the NDOR web site. <http://www.nebraskatransportation.org/design/bridge/bipm/NDOR-BIP-Manual-110311.pdf> You can find a summary of the most important changes in the current Manual in Chapter 1. It is imperative that you and your staff read sections of the Manual that are related to the Metrics listed above. NDOR anticipates a revision to the Manual to incorporate most recent QA Evaluation findings, and a notification will be sent when it is released.

Sincerely,



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State Bridge Engineer

MT/LL/G5-AA1-3

Enclosures: BIP QA Evaluation, 2010 Cycle – Summary
QC Examples for the NE BIP

Copy: County Clerk
FHWA/NE Division Office
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